

DEPARTMENT of the INTERIOR

news release

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

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U.S. WILDLIFE SCIENTISTS MEETING WITH SOVIETS JAN. 23-FEB. 1

Secretary of the Interior Rogers C. B. Morton announced today that a team of American scientists representing government and private organizations is meeting with Soviet scientists in Moscow Jan. 23-Feb. 1 to develop cooperative wildlife conservation programs between the United States and Soviet Union.

Wildlife conservation is one of 11 specific areas designed to implement the Agreement on Cooperation in the Field of Environmental Protection, signed in Moscow by President Richard Nixon and Chairman of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet N.V. Podgorny on May 23, 1972.

In addition to wildlife, the Interior Department was assigned major responsibilities in the areas of earthquake prediction, tundra ecosystems and the permafrost zone. Wildlife project leader is Dr. Joseph P. Linduska of Interior's Fish and Wildlife Service.

Joining Dr. Linduska on the American team will be Professor W. J. L. Sladen, Johns Hopkins University; Scott McVay, Environmental Defense Fund; Professor Robert W. Elsnar, Scripps Institution of Oceanography; Dr. F. Raymond Fosberg, Smithsonian Institution; Dr. R. V. Miller, Commerce Department's National Marine Fisheries Service; and Earl Baysinger, Fish and Wildlife Service. Dr. Lee M. Talbot, senior scientist of the President's Council on Environmental Quality, will represent Council Chairman Russell Train.

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Specific items on the Moscow agenda include:

- ** Exchange of scientists, technical information, animals, and plants aimed toward conservation of rare or endangered wildlife and plants.
- ** Discuss possibility of a bilateral treaty to provide for management of wildlife that move between the territories of the two nations, such as waterfowl, cranes, walrus, and polar bear.
- ** Determine the population and distribution of polar bears.
- ** Promote analysis of biological materials on the walrus.
- ** Develop means of monitoring abundance and yield of ice seals in the Bering and Chukchi Seas.
- ** Draw conclusions, following marking studies, concerning the migration routes and separation of stocks of exploited species of whales (primarily fin whales, but also including sei and sperm whales).
- ** Identify environmental factors which may be affecting the population of gray whales on their summer grounds in the Bering and Chukchi Seas.
- ** Develop a census technique to index population size and trends for the bowhead whale.
- ** Implement cooperative studies of problems involving northern swans.
- ** Exchange technical data on waterfowl and their breeding grounds.
- ** Inventory the populations of seabirds in the Beaufort, Chukchi, and Bering Seas and study their seasonal ecology.
- ** Discuss possible transfer of a nucleus herd of musk ox to the Soviet Union.
- ** Exchange information on the management of reindeer, wolves, and other free-ranging wild animal herds.

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